



## Early Journal Content on JSTOR, Free to Anyone in the World

This article is one of nearly 500,000 scholarly works digitized and made freely available to everyone in the world by JSTOR.

Known as the Early Journal Content, this set of works include research articles, news, letters, and other writings published in more than 200 of the oldest leading academic journals. The works date from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth centuries.

We encourage people to read and share the Early Journal Content openly and to tell others that this resource exists. People may post this content online or redistribute in any way for non-commercial purposes.

Read more about Early Journal Content at <http://about.jstor.org/participate-jstor/individuals/early-journal-content>.

JSTOR is a digital library of academic journals, books, and primary source objects. JSTOR helps people discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content through a powerful research and teaching platform, and preserves this content for future generations. JSTOR is part of ITHAKA, a not-for-profit organization that also includes Ithaka S+R and Portico. For more information about JSTOR, please contact [support@jstor.org](mailto:support@jstor.org).

## FAITH AND FREEDOM IN MODERN RELIGION

In order to determine what must be regarded as unbelief in the thought of the nineteenth century Professor Sheldon<sup>1</sup> applies as a standard of measurement the essential content of the Christian system, namely, "a staunch theistic conception, that conception in which the ultimate reality is presented as thoroughly personal;" that "Jesus Christ was a transcendent personality and came into the world to fulfil an extraordinary mediatorial office," and "such a view of man as is consonant with his dignity as a subject of moral rule and a son and servant of the Most High." He classifies the unbelief of the century under the three heads of philosophical theories; of quasi-scientific, theological, and ethical theories; and of critical theories. Radical idealism, sensationalism, positivism, agnostic evolution, and pessimism, are treated in the first division, while the challenging of the supernatural, the denial of the finality of Christianity, the denial of the transcendent sonship of Jesus Christ, and utilitarian and naturalistic ethics are discussed under the second, and the theories of Strauss, Baur, Renan, Keim, and the more radical criticism of the Old and New Testament form the third portion of the book.

Mr. Sheldon writes in a clear style and shows wide reading in the broad field he covers. He aimed to observe a "proper balance" between "compact and accurate exposition" and criticism of the different forms of unbelief and in this he has succeeded. His exposition is clear and historical and his criticism such as is commonly urged by enlightened orthodox apologists. The treatment is very general and the criticisms are commonplace. Any ordinary history of philosophy would give a fuller exposition of the philosophical theories discussed and the most that can be said of this work is that it gives under one compass with its criticism upon them the theories that modern orthodoxy regards as opposed to the Christian system. He has not appropriated or used in criticism the newer psychology with its functional character of knowledge, nor has he felt the need of a new apologetics in harmony with the philosophical thinking of today. Professor Sheldon does not seem to realize the profound change that is demanded by our modern view of the world, and clings to elements that belong to a deistic interpretation of the universe. This lurks in his discussion of miracle. Evolution admits of the principle of progress, of uncaused variations, of new forces, but this emergence is in the processes of nature or in the consciousness of man; it is the character of the natural world. In our modern world with its doctrine of the immanence of God it is difficult to find place for miracle as

<sup>1</sup> *Unbelief in the Nineteenth Century*. By Henry C. Sheldon. Cincinnati: Eaton & Mains, 1907. 399 pages. \$2.00 net.

it has been traditionally held. As Dr. Oman says, "it has its home in a deistic system where it is the one loophole for prayer or any spontaneous utterance of piety, the one skylight in the mechanical prison-house." Since the whole process of the natural with every act therein is divine, would it not be more to the point to show the psychology of "miracle," to point out that miracle is a term of religious valuation, that the religious faith regards as miracle an event which comes as extraordinary and unexpected and as a medium of redemptive grace? Science may determine the place of that event in the causal series but religious faith appropriates the grace it brings and leads it back to the omnipotent love of God.

It can readily be seen from the manner of treatment that the unity of the book is external; it is a form of classification such as existed in some sciences in the pre-evolutionary stage. Though in his concluding remarks the author admits that in the intellectual engagements of the century an improved exposition of "one or another point of the content" of the Christian system should be gained, yet, in the treatise it is fair to say that Christianity is taken rather as a static magnitude, as a "system," and the movements of thought deviating from this system are put down as unbelief. Thus Ritschlianism and Unitarianism are discussed under forms of unbelief. The moderate spirit and historical method of his discussion are a criticism upon the method of treatment.

In his *Problem of Faith and Freedom in the Last Two Centuries*<sup>2</sup> Dr. Oman considers much the same material but there is a vitality, a freshness and unity about his treatment because he sees in all these movements of thought a struggle of faith and freedom, a struggle as to "how faith is to be absolute and freedom absolute, yet both one." It is in this struggle that the essential nature of both becomes clear, and the essential values of the moral life and of religious faith emerge in their purity and can be brought home to the man of today.

Dr. Oman treats his subject historically, starting with Luther's doctrine of faith and freedom, considering the intellectual movement of Descartes and the English philosophers, then Pascal and Jesuitism, English Deism and Butler's analogy, Kant and Rationalism, Romanticism and Schleiermacher, Newman's Apologia, the critical theories of Baur and the following centuries, and the theology of experience with Ritschl as its chief exponent.

The essential value of this book is in its clear recognition of the absolute necessity of freedom and of its real unity with faith. "Freedom is not merely fundamental, it is the exclusive basis of spiritual belief now left us. We

<sup>2</sup> *The Problem of Faith and Freedom in the Last Two Centuries*. By John Oman. New York: Armstrong, 1906. 443 pages.

must now found faith upon the very thing we have thought would destroy it." "Faith in a material guarantee is not faith." Rationalism regarded faith and freedom as intellectual instead of moral, as purely individual and so formal, lacking the content which comes through appropriation of the social values. But faith is a matter of conscience, and "we must recognize the absolute right of conscience to rule, to utter its own verdict, and to listen to no alien voice." There can be absolutely no formal, external authority, as such, since it crushes freedom and corrupts faith. But the Ritschlian doctrine of the church as the medium of redemption, or the recognition of the social and historical character of religious values is essential, and for this reason Jesus Christ will occupy an absolute place in the religious life.

One may not agree with the author in all his interpretations and criticisms. Is it true that Ritschl ignored the moral order of the world and thought only of the honor of God in his doctrine of reconciliation? Is Ritschl subject to the criticism which he brings so trenchantly against the theologians of the Middle Ages? He made prominent the social nature of God and the social character of the kingdom of God. Does not this save the value Dr. Oman wishes preserved? It may be questioned if on the fact and reality of freedom we can draw deductions and distinctions with such absoluteness and finality as is done in the last chapter of this book. But it is evident that while our author will have no alien element in the faith he does not mean to surrender any essential of the faith itself.

Dr. Oman has written an excellent book, which, though it may not have a new message, has a vital one and a mission to the religious workers of today. The student will value it as a contribution to historical theology and a much needed supplement to such a work as Pfeiderer's *Development of Theology Since the Days of Kant*. The reader will admire the lucidity, purity, and nobility of his style; his appreciative, illuminating interpretation of the great thinkers, and of their place in, and contribution to, the great currents of thought; his clear recognition of the supremacy of conscience, and of faith as an inner and personal conviction; his spiritual intuition; his trenchant criticism; his sanity of judgment and reverent spirit.

W. C. KEIRSTEAD

WOODSTOCK, N. B.

---

### CHRISTIANITY AND THE SOCIAL CRISIS

Professor Rauschenbusch has had the courage to present<sup>1</sup> the argument for socialism from the standpoint of a Christian scholar. At the moment

<sup>1</sup> *Christianity and the Social Crisis*. By Walter Rauschenbusch. New York: Macmillan, 1907. 429 pages. \$1.75.